

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
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TN DEPT OF ENVIRONMENT
AND CONSERVATION

DEC 18 2013

DIV OF WATER RESOURCES
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December 6, 2013

401 Church St.
6th Floor, L&C Annex
Nashville, TN 37243-1534

Dear Erin O'Brien,

I write you today not only as a Biology Major at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, but also as a concerned Tennessean. I wish to address the matter of the Nash Mega-dairy located in Chapel Hill, an issue I know you have dealt with previously. To my dismay, I have learned that a California-based mega-dairy, Nash Dairy Company, applied for a permit around June 2013 to allow their factory to pump sewage into Clem Creek and the Upper Duck River Watershed. Despite the obvious uproar from the Chapel Hill community and surrounding areas, this permit was granted by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. I am asking you to reconsider this decision after weighing all the consequences that come with allowing an industrialized farm into your community.

Industrialized animal factories, such as the Nash Mega-dairy, inevitably have enormous consequences on the environment. This damage to the environment is caused mostly by the main goal of an industrialized farm, mass production of animals for a low cost. Pollution of the community's air, water and soil are environmental consequences that come along with allowing an industrialized factory into the area. Mark Floegel emphasizes this with a specific example in his article "The Dirt on Factory Farms," "In June 1995, a breached waste pit at Oceanview Farms in Onslow County, North Carolina spilled 25 million gallons of feces and urine into the New River-- the spill killed 25 million fish and closed 365,000 acres of coastal wetland to shellfishing."

Relatedly, when the area is polluted, community members are more susceptible to illness. You may think that granting this permit is in the best interest of the community, but I believe you are making this decision ignorant of the impact that the mega-dairy will have on the community's health. When animal factories damage the air, water and soil health, the individuals living near the factory are also affected. Their drinking water is contaminated, their fresh air is polluted, and their soil is weakened. Community members must pay for this factory to operate through doctor bills, prescriptions, and other expenses needed to buffer the damage of an animal factory. This is

crucial to know because the three communities that will be mostly impacted are Unionville, Chapel Hill, and Rover; however, Columbia will also be affected because they share the Upper Duck River as their source of drinking water. More threatening is its location on Highway 41 that is three miles away from an elementary school and only two away from a middle school.

Lack of appropriate animal welfare is another consequence of industrial farms, simply due to the facts that there are too many animals to be properly taken care of and that they must be seen as factors of production rather than real animals. John Ikerd highlights this in his work "The Inevitable Economic, Ecological, and Social Consequences of CAFOs." Ikerd explains, "The economic efficiency demands that animals be kept in environments suited for economic well-being of investors rather than physical well-being of animals." This leads to sickening treatment of livestock, including the way in which they are raised and contained. The Nash Mega-dairy will contain 1,800 cows on one acre of land. This places the livestock in a situation in which animal welfare cannot possibly be responsibly regulated.

I come to you with this issue because the 34th factory farm is being built in Chapel Hill right now, despite all the consequences it will have for the community. You have the power to stop this before any damage is done to the environment, community members, and animals. The community has expressed their displeasure with the factory, and now I have shown mine. I earnestly ask that you rethink the Nash Mega-dairy permit, for the sake of all these factors.

Sincerely,



Joanna Elmore

Undergraduate at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

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